

# Department of Correction Improves Mental Health Services

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*"We remain committed to providing mental health services which will assist offenders in their ability to successfully return to society and become productive and law abiding citizens."*

*Commissioner, J. David Donahue*

Indianapolis, Indiana - (January 29, 2007) - In an effort to improve offender mental health services in the Department of Correction, major changes have been implemented by Commissioner J. David Donahue.

The Department began moving Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) offenders from the secured control unit of the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in April 2006. Those offenders were moved to correctional facilities able to appropriately address their mental health needs, while maintaining necessary protection for Department staff and the public.

On January 26, 2007, Commissioner J. David Donahue signed a proposed agreement with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) which validates improvements the Department has put in place since early 2006 to ensure appropriate mental health services for offenders.

Seriously mentally ill offenders are no longer housed at the secured control unit at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, and the Department has agreed not to place SMI offenders at that location in the future.

"The Department implemented changes in housing seriously mentally ill offenders because the transfers were an appropriate response to public safety and the mental health needs of our offender population," said Commissioner Donahue. "We remain committed to providing mental health services which will assist offenders in their ability to successfully return to society and become productive and law abiding citizens."

## About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The

Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.